Meeting Summary
Delaware Geographic Data Committee
October 21, 1998
University of Delaware Center for Composite Materials

Attendance List: [*]

Randy Speicher -- City of Dover
Jeff Bergstrom -- City of New Castle
Babatunde Durosomo -- City of Wilmington
David W. Blankenship -- City of Wilmington
Bryan Lennon -- City of Wilmington
Emery Graham -- City of Wilmington
Paul Morrill -- Delaware City
Linda Price -- Delaware City
Vincent Rucinski -- DelDOT
Donald Berry -- DHSS
George Yocher -- DHSS
David S. Hugg, III -- State Planning
    Coordination
Michael B. Mahaffie -- State Planning
    Coordination
Dorothy Morris -- State Planning Coordination
Mark Davis -- Department of Agriculture
Lyn Anderson -- Department of Labor
Gary Yakimov -- Department of Labor
Kathy B. Millman -- DNREC
Dennis Murphy -- DNREC
Susan Moerschel -- DNREC
Deborah S. Sullivan -- DNREC
Lee Emmons -- DNREC
William B. Brierly -- DNREC

Lloyd Stoebner -- Department of Public Safety
Howard P. Lowell -- Department of State
Michael G. Townshend -- Department of State
Kevin Coyle -- Kent County
Debbie Flad – DSCYF
Robert Madanat -- New Castle County
Melissa Hughes -- New Castle County
Tim Westbrook -- New Castle County
Robert Seaberg -- Office of Information Services
Bob Mercready -- Office of Information Services
Christina Golden -- State Budget Office
Dennis J. Norwood -- Sussex County
Richard Sacher -- University of Delaware
Nicole Minni -- University of Delaware
Jian Chen -- University of Delaware
Vern Svatos -- University of Delaware
John Laznik -- University of Delaware
William S Schenck -- Delaware Geological
    Survey
David R. Racca -- University of Delaware
Vinton Valentine -- University of Delaware
David Saladino -- Wilmington Area Planning
    Council
Karen Cooper -- Delaware State Housing
    Authority

Welcome and Introductions

David S. Hugg, the State Planning Coordinator, gave a welcome and facilitated an "around the room" introductions process. He briefed the group on the purpose of the meeting, which was to establish and begin the work of a Delaware Geographic Data Committee (DGDC) as called for in House Bill 395, which passed the general assembly in June 1998. The DGDC is intended to help facilitate the sharing of geo-referenced data among state agencies, state funded agencies, the counties, municipalities and other interested parties.

Report from the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC)

Sandy Schenck, of the Delaware Geological Survey, gave an overview of the history of the SMAC, which was created by executive order in 1978. SMAC functioned for many years as the coordinating group for state mapping efforts and liaison between the state and the US Geological Survey (USGS) for mapping issues. He explained that a shift of GIS-related responsibility at the federal level from the USGS to the new Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) had sidetracked the SMAC, which met last in 1993. The SMAC was re-invigorated by the passage of HB 395, which explicitly called for SMAC to work with the new DGDC. The new SMAC held its first meeting on September 25, 1998. Minutes of that meeting are available from Mr. Schenck and will be posted on either the DGS or the State Planning web site.

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[*] This list is based on the sign-in sheets filled in at the meeting, on the pre-printed attendance list as checked off at the meeting, and on our recollection. We're fallible. If you remember someone who was there whom we missed, please let us know.

Mr. Schenck explained that SMAC will serve as the informal data user/data generator roundtable for the DGDC. It will be a place where agencies can explain their on-going projects and data needs.

Mr. Schenck also made note of several data sets coming out, including the new Digital Line Graphs, created by DGS through an agreement with USGS, and new aerial photography, at 1:40,000 scale flown in the spring of 1998 by USGS.

Introduction to the Delaware Geographic Data Committee (DGDC) (Presentation outline attached)
Mike Mahaffie gave an overview of the Delaware Geographic Data Committee (DGDC). He explained the intent of the group – to better coordinate GIS data, its focus on communication, and its "coordination, not control" emphasis.

Mr. Mahaffie laid out the basic organizational structure of the group, its wide membership, consensus focus, and use of subcommittees. He reinforced the importance of the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee and discussed the ideas of subcommittees to handle Metadata and Training issues.

He discussed the general plan for quarterly DGDC meetings timed to follow quarterly SMAC meetings. He discussed a proposal to have a spring GIS Conference, to follow-up on a GIS Conference presented several years ago by the University of Delaware.

Mr. Mahaffie presented several basic DGDC communication strategies, including a newsletter to be produced by the Office of Information Services, an e-mail listserv (del-gis@otma1.state.de.us – subscription directions attached), and a network of web pages hosted by OIS, State Planning, the University and others. (See http://www.state.de.us/planning/coord/dgdc.htm for more information)

Mr. Mahaffie also briefly discussed new and pending data products, including the Digital Line Graphs, new Digital Ortho Photography from DelDOT, and accelerated work on digital soils maps of the state.

Brainstorm Session I -- Goals for the DGDC
Mike Mahaffie, with help from Alex Settles, of the University of Delaware, facilitated a brainstorm session in which everyone was asked to share their goals for the group. What follows is a list of those goals:
1. To "go along with the herd" – coordinate and network with other users
2. To identify, and have access to, the best data in Delaware
3. To have a mechanism by which data gets listed and metadata gets captured
4. To make it easy to create and use metadata
5. To have some standards, for metadata, for place and theme names
6. To make it easier for small municipalities to take advantage of GIS and to learn more about GIS
7. To have data from all agencies/groups become more accessible
8. To ease access and eliminate firewalls
9. To have regular updates of data sets, especially the orthos
10. To facilitate data sharing and data acquisition
11. To have standards for metadata and standards/metadata for project descriptions to help avoid duplication of effort
12. To coordinate Delaware activities with activities at the regional and national level and to learn from regional and national partners
13. To set priorities for data acquisition
14. To set standards for the use of data, especially for the use of sensitive data. To make sure that the open data idea doesn't "come back to bite us"
15. To set standards that promote compatibility of GIS platforms and software
16. To enhance the availability of data by including clear information about the accuracy of the data in the metadata (This would help deal with security/liability fears)
17. To create a base map from which all agencies can work
18. To make more base data available
19. To ease data accessibility and data transfer
20. To clarify which agencies/organizations are responsible for which data layers and to formalize responsibilities

21. To focus data efforts on real-world problems (police/fire)
22. To be a voice for funding needs and other assistance
23. To clarify which GIS software products are in use in various agencies
24. To set standard data updating processes
25. To learn from other states and regions
26. To protect sensitive data
27. To share the funding burden
28. To promote better understanding of data sets
29. To provide enhanced training opportunities
30. To promote cost-sharing and public/private partnerships
31. To improve address-matching and geocoding
32. To add value as a partner with other agencies
33. To lean more about, and promote the relationship between data and decision-making
34. To clarify the role of data and GIS in state policy

Clearinghouse Project Report (Presentation outline attached)
Dave Racca and Dick Sacher presented the project to create a Spatial Data Clearinghouse that will serve as a repository of metadata and project descriptions for GIS users in Delaware. The project, which is partly funded under grants from the Federal Geographic Data Committee, is led by the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research and Research Data Management Services, at the University, with assistance from the Office of State Planning Coordination and the University's Institute for Public Administration.

The goals of the project are to establish a spatial data clearinghouse, address policy issues, develop effective documentation tools, promote development of a spatial data framework, investigate Internet-based GIS, and educate data users and data generators. The project envisions collecting metadata on a wide range of data sets in partnership with many state agencies and local governments.

Dick Sacher gave a tour of the latest version (attached) of the project home page (http://www.nsdi.udel.edu/). This will provide links among the DGDC-related web site, links to federal resources, a repository of related documents, and links to metadata collection and metadata search tools.

Brainstorm Session II -- Issues to Tackle via DGDC
Alex Settles, with help from Mike Mahaffie, facilitated a brainstorm session in which everyone was asked to share ideas for issues the group might tackle. As a start, the group discussed issues that might be the focus of the spring GIS conference:

According to Mr. Settles, six areas of interest that have continued to crop up are:
1. Funding
2. Staffing
3. Duplication of Effort
4. Information Sharing
5. Standards
6. Access

Other areas that came from the brainstorming session were:
1. The need for documentation of issues
2. The need for data dictionaries
3. The need for separate, targeted workshops on subjects such as the use of GIS in small communities, the use of GIS in meeting police and fire needs
4. The need to look at cross-platform and data translation issues
5. The need to let the Conference be about data users, not about data and software vendors
6. The need for a training/education committee
7. The need for a census of platform and software usage
8. The need to find ways to develop GIS capabilities at all levels of government
9. A discussion of the target audience for the conference

Discussion: Next Steps
To close the meeting, the group began a general discussion of "next steps" for the DGDC.

Susan Moerschel and others discussed the need for a data gap analysis to track what data we have and what we need. It was mentioned that this might be part of the information to be gained through the Clearinghouse Project. Part of this effort will be determining what the state's data framework is and what it should be. This led to a discussion of the first steps needed to start adding data to the clearinghouse and a further discussion of the metadata tool.

Sandy Schenck called for a firm backbone to the DGDC, to ensure that there is adequate follow-through. Mike Mahaffie explained that he would take responsibility, on behalf of the Office of State Planning Coordination, for keeping the DGDC effort moving.

There was a brief discussion of the need to find a reliable funding source for data acquisition and maintenance and for staffing resources. It was generally agreed that this might depend on being able to make adequate metadata and data publication a regular part of all GIS projects.

Subcommittees
It was agreed that the DGDC should form three subcommittee (aside from the existing SMAC) to start working on some of these areas. These are the Metadata, Framework, and Training subcommittees. The following persons volunteered to serve on these committees. Any others interested in helping out are invited to contact the subcommittee leaders, who are the persons listed first in each case.[*]

- Metadata
  - Dick Sacher
  - Mark Davis
  - Bob Mercready
  - Howard Lowell
  - Debbie Sullivan
  - Sandy Schenck
  - Kathy Millman
  - Mike Mahaffie
  - Jian Chen

- Framework
  - Dave Racca
  - Sandy Schenck
  - David Saladino
  - Dennis Murphy
  - Vince Rucinski
  - Tim Westbrook
  - Vern Svatos
  - Mike Mahaffie

- Training
  - Alex Settles
  - Debbie Sullivan
  - Mike Townshend
  - Lyn Anderson
  - George Yocher
  - Dave Racca
  - Mike Mahaffie

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[*] There may well be errors in these lists, as they are recreated from a scrawled flip chart using mostly first names. If you find an error, as always, let us know and we'll fix it.